



July-August 2012

The Bay Leaf

California Native Plant Society • East Bay Chapter
Alameda & Contra Costa Counties

www.ebcnps.org

www.groups.google.com/group/ebcnps



Calochortus invenustus is known as shy mariposa lily because it is supposedly not as showy as the better known *C. venustus* (which typically has dramatic blotches on the petals). However, shy mariposa lily is nevertheless a very beautiful plant. It occurs from the Mount Hamilton range southwards, and is typically the pale lilac color. But we recently encountered darker plants, including the deep magenta form shown here, on a Jepson workshop this June near Big Bear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains. I have never seen this dramatic color form before.

Photo and text by John Game

GARDEN THOUGHTS

It's the second week of July and as I water "my" section at Native Here, I am struck by how cool the plants in it are! None of them would be appropriate for my garden in Kensington, but I get to enjoy caring for them in the Sunol and Livermore section of the nursery.

The yerba mansa, *Anemopsis californica*, is blooming now and sending out runners. I hope it will retain some bloom through the Plant Fair, but it will die back come winter. When it started to send up fleshy little leaves this spring it was quite a sight, and now the promise is kept with the creamy white petal-like bracts, reddish stems and deep green leaves. It is a plant of wet spots, seeps, springs, low spots in meadows.

I am struck by the vigor of the hollyleaf redberry, *Rhamnus ilicifolia* and muse about what a great inland hedge it could

be. I am most familiar with it growing with hopbush on Mount Diablo, a combination I like. The ones in the nursery came to us from Watershed Nursery, which had great seed germination a few years ago on a batch of seed collected in the Mines Road area, so I did not see the parent plants in the wild.

Another really exciting plant is a huge herbaceous perennial, *Hoita macrostachya*, which shoots up through the springtime and is just starting to show its purple flower spikes. It uses a fair amount of water and blooms in the sun.

These are just some of the wonderful plants I get to water each week.

Charli Daniels (See also the Native Here article on page 4)

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

There will be no membership meeting in July or August, but the meetings will resume in September. Watch the *Bay Leaf*

or the chapter website for announcements of our fall meetings.

BAD NEWS FOR KNOWLAND PARK!

Judge Grillo Decides Zoo Expansion Plan Is Not a New Project.

On July 10th, Judge Evelio Grillo issued his final ruling in CNPS's lawsuit with Friends of Knowland Park against the City of Oakland and the Oakland Zoo, stating that the Zoo's current expansion plan into Knowland Park is merely a modification of the 1998 Amended Master Plan project. Sometimes in the court of law it's possible to find that up is down and black is white. Such is the case here. Our attorneys—Shute, Mihaly, & Weinberger—argued eloquently that the Zoo's plan, which adds a veterinary hospital and an aerial gondola, quadruples the size of the Interpretive Center, and includes other major changes that were detailed in our briefs, results in a new project. After all, when Safeway wants to renovate an existing store on an urban street corner, it qualifies as a new project and a full EIR is required. In the end, the court disagreed with us, and the accompanying photos show who loses as a result of the court's decision.

We knew from the start that the case was challenging to win. Here's why. In 1998 after seventeen meetings between the Zoo and the citizens opposed to the 1998 expansion plan, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the parties. The park users thought that their concerns had been addressed and that the MOU was legally binding. They thought that was better than suing the City and Zoo.

They were wrong. When the Zoo didn't build the 1998 plan but instead chose to wait and unveil an even larger and more environmentally damaging plan 12 years later, opponents faced a much steeper standard of judicial review. If the court decided that the new project isn't really a new project but a modification of the old project, then all the Lead Agency (City of Oakland) had to do was prove that it used "substantial evidence" to show that the modified project is less damaging than the original version, whether or not their evidence is accurate, a very easy legal test to meet.

Arguing that the MOU was not legally binding, one attorney for the City said, "The time to sue was back in 1998." in other words, opponents of the project got snookered.

Amends to Nature

*I have loved colours, and not flowers;
Their motion, not the swallows wings;
And wasted more than half my hours
Without the comradeship of things.*

*How is it, now, that I can see,
With love and wonder and delight,
The children of the hedge and tree,
The little lords of day and night?*

Judge Grillo's ruling suggests that any developer can propose a low-impact, modest project, then obtain a lower level environmental approval, avoiding a full Environmental Impact Report, and then—with the collusion of a pro-development city government—dramatically ramp up the project while never completing a full EIR, even on public parkland. A full EIR would have required the consideration of alternatives which the Zoo avidly sought to avoid. This is a terrible interpretation of the California Environmental Quality Act. We are currently discussing an appeal with our attorneys.

The project is a long way from being built. The Zoo must first get permits from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, since the project will have impacts on core habitat for the Alameda whipsnake, a species protected by both the federal and state Endangered Species Acts. The project would also destroy maritime chaparral and native bunchgrass prairie, two plant communities deemed rare by the California Department of Fish and Game. As a result, CDFG has recommended moving the Interpretive Center away from the chaparral and suggests that the project footprint could be further reduced by locating other facilities within the current Zoo footprint. We couldn't agree more.

In addition, while the Zoo will not publish the financing plan for this project, it appears they will be placing a parcel tax measure on the Alameda County ballot to tap even more public funding. Currently, the Zoo is supported in large measure by various public sources from the city and the East Bay Regional Park District. The County has not yet announced when the parcel tax measure will be presented to voters.

For more information on Knowland Park and on the issues raised by the Zoo's attempts to expand into the park, visit www.saveknowland.org.

Laura Baker

*How is it that I see the roads,
No longer with usurping eyes,
A twilight meeting-place for toads,
A mid-day mart for butterflies?*

*I feel, in every midge that hums,
Life, fugitive and infinite,
And suddenly the world becomes
A part of me and I of it.*

Arthur Symonds

KNOWLAND PARK: ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN



Knowland Park users, like these, who can currently explore the botanically rich heart of Knowland Park will no longer have access to it once the Zoo's perimeter fence is built. Photo by Lewis Lubin.



Up to 75% of the stand of the rare maritime chaparral can be removed to make the Interpretive Center "fire safe." Park users who can currently explore the botanically rich heart of Knowland Park will no longer have access to it once the Zoo's perimeter fence is erected. Photo by Laura Baker.



Purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*), the state grass of California, in Knowland Park. Photo by Mack Casterman.



This population of the locally rare Bristly leptosiphon (*Leptosiphon acicularis*) in Knowland Park will be literally thrown to the wolves since it will be fenced in with the wolves on exhibit. Photo by Ken Uchi-Uea



This lovely heritage oak, ironically the namesake of the City of Oakland, is one of many that will be cut down to make room for the Zoo's Interpretive Center. Photo by Laura Baker.

NATIVE HERE

Summer is here and we have had some hot days, which are hard on plants in pots. We've lost a few plants to the heat. June didn't have the usual fog we often get.

We sold almost all of the bulbs we put out for sale. They were blooming nicely. Now that they are dormant be sure not to water them. They are adapted to California's dry summers. We'll have more bulbs for sale at our Plant Fair October 27-28.

Annuals didn't come up well this year, so we had only a few for sale. We have plenty of grasses and sedges, however. They can be planted in the summer, but shrubs and trees do best if planted in the fall or winter.

Summer is a good time to read up on native plants. We have the *Vegetation Management Almanac for the East Bay Hills* to help you preserve native plant and wildlife habitat while reducing fire hazards; *Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens* to help you with pruning, watering, identifying pest and diseases, and other garden tasks; and our own CD of *East Bay Native Plants*, put together by Janice Bray and other Native Here volunteers, to help you identify plants that grow around here and what their growing requirements are.

We need volunteers to commit to adopting each of the sections in the nursery to oversee its watering, weeding and inventory. Open hours are a good time to start, but scheduling can be flexible once you are familiar with your section. Volunteers

are also welcome to drop in and help with nursery tasks such as striking cuttings, potting up young plants, watering, weeding, and nursery maintenance.

The nursery is at 101 Golf Course Drive on the Berkeley side of Tilden Regional Park, across the street from the entrance to the Tilden Golf Course.

The Plant Fair is scheduled for October 27-28. There are openings on the planning committee. Are you good at publicity? Do you like to talk to craftspeople who make things related to native plants? How about serving refreshments to our wonderful volunteers? Are you a natural salesperson who could sell bulbs, books, posters, hats, memberships? Do you like to demonstrate your physical strength by lifting heavy flats of plants onto and off carts and into people's cars? Are you excited about learning what plants grow in your locality and are willing to water and inventory them and help people choose the right plants when Fair time comes?

The Plant Fair can certainly use people who answer **YES** to any of those questions. Contact Charli nativehere@ebcnps.org indicating Plant Fair in the subject line.

Charli Danielsen and Margot Cunningham

MEMBERSHIP

Our Chapter will have a table at the fifth Beaver Festival, which takes place on Saturday, August 4, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, at Marina Vista and Alhambra Avenue in Martinez, California. (The location is close to the Amtrak Station in Martinez.) The festival is sponsored by Give a Dam (www.martinezbeavers.org), an organization which protects beavers in Martinez.

See the web site linked above for the charming story of how beavers came to dwell in Martinez.

A broad margin of leisure is as beautiful in a man's life as in a book. Haste makes waste, no less in life than in housekeeping. Keep the time, observe the hours of the universe, not of the cars.

A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.

A truly good book teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down, and commence living on its hint. What I began by reading, I must finish by acting.

An early-morning walk is a blessing for the whole day.

As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.

Be not simply good - be good for something.

Be true to your work, your word, and your friend.

Henry David Thoreau

CONSERVATION ANALYST REPORT

EBCNPS signs on as supporting organization for Friends of Tesla Park

Our Corral Hollow Botanic Priority Protection Area (BPPA) is currently being threatened by a proposed expansion of the Carnegie State Vehicle Recreation Area (SVRA). Carnegie SVRA is a motorcycle park in eastern Alameda County. It is operated under the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of State Department of Parks and Recreation (OHMVRD). Several years ago, adjacent property (called the Tesla-Alameda Purchase by State Parks) was purchased to enlarge the motorcycle park, but after 3 attempts, the State has not been able to produce a successful EIR. However, another attempt at getting an EIR passed is in the works that will accompany a new General Plan for the Carnegie SVRA. The Tesla-Alameda property contains expansive blue oak woodlands, rolling grassland habitat and a sensitive natural community of desert olive scrub. This area was recently designated as a critical linkage and wildlife corridor by the Bay Area Open Space Council. In order to ensure that this special area is spoken for during the upcoming General Plan process, EBCNPS has signed on as a supporter of a group called The Friends of Tesla Park (www.teslapark.org). We will be assisting them by providing botanical information and commenting on the process as this plan moves forward. On June 11 I submitted a comment letter on behalf of EBCNPS regarding the scoping for this EIR. Our letter detailed the botanical value of this land and emphasized the importance of the considering environmentally superior alternatives to this potentially damaging expansion project as part of the EIR. Considering the damage at the existing Carnegie SVRA that the State's OHMVR Division has been unable to mitigate, making the property an open space preserve for hiking and other non-motorized recreation would be the best use in our opinion. A copy of our comment letter can be found on the conservation blog at: <http://www.ebcnps.wordpress.com>.

LBNL Update

I met with representatives of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (hereinafter "the Lab") and the University of California Berkeley on April 19th to discuss the Lab's proposal to build their new second campus at the Richmond Field Station (part of our Richmond Shoreline BPPA). The meeting was attended by the lab's Environmental lawyer, human resources representatives for the lab and the university, an environmental planner from UC, and the planner for the project. Our environmental coalition included the Sierra Club, Citizens for East Shore Parks, and Audubon. The rep for the Lab gave us the schedule for the project. The Lab has ID'd the Field Station as their preferred site. Now they will start work on a "Long Range Development Plan" (LRDP). The LRDP is to be finalized this December. They plan to start CEQA and NEPA review during this year. This review could be finished by the end of 2013. Construction could start in early 2014, and the site could be occupied by 2016. According to the Lab reps, the existing build-out plan is purely theoretical and it will be

better defined as the planning process progresses. I explained the importance of avoiding the remnant coastal prairie habitat at the field station site, and the Lab and University reps seemed to take my recommendations seriously.

On June 18 I attended a site tour of the Richmond Field Station with representatives from interested environmental organizations and planners for the Lab. During this tour I showed the lab planners the areas of the property with intact coastal prairie habitat and explained the importance of avoidance of those areas during the project's construction and final build-out. The Lab appears interested in our comments, and we have agreed to maintain these informal discussions. I am hopeful that working with the Lab at the front end of this process will allow us to help shape a development plan that protects and even celebrates the valuable natural resources of the site. This is a long-term project, and I will continue to provide updates as they become available.

Proposed New Farm Development in Tassajara Valley

I am continuing to work with Save Mt. Diablo, the Greenbelt Alliance, and the Sierra Club to oppose the New Farm development in the Tassajara valley (our East Dublin/Tassajara BPPA). On April 12 EBCNPS co-sponsored a Contra Costa Supervisor Candidates' Forum on the Environment. We were joined by Save Mt. Diablo, the Greenbelt Alliance, the Sierra Club, and the League of Conservation Voters in sponsoring the event. The invited supervisor candidates (Tomi Van de Brooke, of Orinda; Sean White, of Lafayette; and Candace Andersen, of Danville) were all from District 2, which is the district which has a supervisorial slot opening in the fall. This District also contains our East Dublin/Tassajara BPPA, where the proposed New Farm Development is to be built. The event was very well attended, even with it being a cold rainy night. About 100 people were in the audience. Interestingly, the candidates all professed to be very environmentally oriented. The candidates, including Candace Anderson who ended up winning the election, vowed to protect the urban limit line, and even went so far as to say that they would oppose the "New Farm" development as it is currently proposed due to urban limit line issues. This is really good news for us because we now have Supervisor Anderson on the record claiming she will fight to protect the Urban Limit Line and the Tassajara Valley from urban development. This will be useful in the future if the New Farm development continues to move forward in the planning process. I am planning to meet with Supervisor Anderson in the coming weeks in order to build a relationship and discuss EBCNPS's conservation priorities in District 2.

SR-239/ TriLink Connector Highway Between Brentwood and Tracy

At the end of May and on July 10, I attended meetings regarding a two-year scoping study for a proposed roadway between Tracy and Brentwood. This roadway is being dubbed

“TriLink” or State Route 239, and it is being considered due to a \$14 million federal earmark grant from State Representative Richard Pombo whose family happens to own substantial property assets in the area that will be serviced by this road. The proposed roadway would connect SR 4 in Brentwood with 205 in Tracy and would possibly also link up with 580 east of the Altamont Pass.

PowerPoint presentations that the planners gave at these meetings can be found at this link: <http://trilink239.org/presentations.html>.

I am attending these scoping meetings (8 total) as part of the “NGO Stakeholders study group.” Also in this group with me are representatives from *Contra Costa Council, California Alliance for Jobs, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust, CA Farm Bureau, East Bay Economic Development Alliance, East Bay Bicycle Coalition, Delta Pedalers, Greenbelt Alliance, Sierra Club, and California Trucking Association*. The feasibility of this road remains to be seen. It would have substantial environmental impacts, bisecting both our Altamont and Byron BPPA, and the preliminary cost estimation puts the total build-out between 600 and 900 million dollars. Our opinion is that this road should not be built and that alternatives should be considered to achieve the goals of this project. EBCNPS is concerned that such a road would have massive growth inducing impacts along its course that would result in a legacy of continued urban sprawl in Eastern Contra Costa County. I will continue to provide updates on this process as it moves forward.

RESTORATION

Saturday, August 4, (first Saturday of each month) at Pt. Isabel on the Bay Trail, 10 am to 2 pm. We remove invasive plants and re-vegetate with native plants grown from plants found at the site. We are located at the end of Rydin Road just off the I-580 next to Hoffman Marsh. Contact info: Tom Kelly, kyotousa@sbcglobal.net, cell: 510-684-6484.

Saturday, August 4, 9:00 am, Skyline Gate at Redwood Regional Park. Maybe this is not the oldest *Genista* rip in the East Bay, but it is certainly one with a long continuity. We will return to East Ridge Trail and see what we can remove before the soils dry completely. If you need loaner gloves or tools, you can just show up, but it helps to e-mailDRosario@ebparks.org.

Saturday, August 4, (first Saturday of each month) at Pt. Isabel on the Bay Trail, 10 am to 2 pm. We remove invasive plants and re-vegetate with native plants grown from plants found at the site. We are located at the end of Rydin Road just

Alameda County Solar Policy

I continued to work with Alameda County planners to ensure that EBCNPS concerns are considered in the County’s forthcoming solar policy for rural areas of the county. In the first months of the new year, I attended two scoping meetings on behalf of EBCNPS. These meetings were well attended by concerned environmental groups including those who are part of our “SOLAR” Coalition, as well as by solar development interests. At the most recent meeting, on April 31, the County planners provided their draft solar policies for our review. These draft policies were arranged as nine new policies to be added to the East County Area Plan, and three implementation programs. I was pleased to see “Policy 3: The County shall place the highest priority on the development of solar energy capacity in the existing built environment in order to minimize environmental impacts” and I joined the rest of the SOLAR Coalition in noting to the planners that this policy should be the top priority for the County. According to the County planner, the County will support Policy 3 with amendments to zoning in order to make the urban solar development process more streamlined. In the meantime, no new applications are being considered for solar energy facilities.

I have recently received news that at the April 17th Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board of Supervisors instructed County staff to begin work on a similar solar policy, so we will be closely following that process as it ramps up.

Mack Casterman

off the I-580 next to Hoffman Marsh. Contact info: Tom Kelly, kyotousa@sbcglobal.net, cell: 510-684-6484.

Saturday, August 11, 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Park. Meet at the parking lot, where we will scope out weeds and decide on the worksite for the day. We will provide water, gloves and snacks, but please let us know if you need gloves and/or tools by e-mail to janetgawthrop47@gmail.com or jmanley@ebparks.org. We will finish up around 1 pm.

Sunday, August 19, 9 am, 9:00 am, Sibley Regional Park. Meet at the parking lot off of Skyline on the Oakland side of the park, where we’ll distribute gloves, tools and water. From there, you can join the main group to dent the wall of broom on the Sibley-to-Tilden trail. For the poison-oak shy, there are also areas near the entrance to clear poison hemlock, Chinese onions and forget-me-nots to make room for woodland strawberries and cow parsnip.

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Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name _____

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I wish to affiliate with:

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___ Other _____

Membership category:

___ Individual, \$45

___ Family, Library, Group or International, \$75

___ Plant lover, \$100

___ Patron, \$300

___ Benefactor, \$600

___ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

___ Limited Income or student, \$25.00

___ Other _____

Mail application and check to: California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento CA 95816